



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana**

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SOUTHEAST INDIANA FELON CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS, USING FALSE DOCUMENTS, AND OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Charges are more results from U.S. Attorney's Violent Crime Initiative

PRESS RELEASE

MADISON – Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, announced today that Courtney L. Crouch, 54, of Jennings County, has been charged with being a convicted felon in possession of firearms. In a second, separate indictment, Crouch was charged with three counts of making or using false documents and three counts of obstruction of justice. Both indictments were brought following an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”).

“Back in March, we made a commitment with our Violent Crime Initiative to work with local law enforcement to identify and federally prosecute individuals who have shown a habitual disregard for the rule of law,” Hogsett said. “These charges should send a serious message to anyone who would consider misusing firearms or lying to federal investigators.”

The government alleges that on February 16, 2011, Deputies of the Jennings County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant at Crouch's residence in the town of Deputy, just outside of North Vernon. Sheriff's Deputies executing the search warrant recovered more than \$30,000 in cash along with quantities of cocaine, marijuana, and hydrocodone. Crouch was charged in state court in Jennings County on nine felony counts of drug dealing and possession of drugs, and the money recovered was turned over to the FBI for federal asset forfeiture proceedings.

As part of those federal asset forfeiture proceedings, Crouch submitted documentation to the Special Agent in Charge at the FBI's Indianapolis office, including three signed affidavits, all of which included a certificate purporting to be that of a notary public. On July 22, 2011, that documentation was formally filed by Crouch with the United States District Court.

Further investigation has given investigators reason to believe that the notary public named in the three affidavits did not notarize any of the documents in question, and it is alleged that Crouch knowingly made or used these false documents in an effort to obstruct the asset forfeiture process.

On October 12, 2011, the FBI and local law enforcement officers executed federal search warrants at Crouch's home and business. During this second search, officers recovered a number of weapons that Crouch is alleged to have illegally possessed as a convicted felon. The firearms seized included the following:

- AK-47 style C.N. Romarm S.A. rifle
- 9mm Jimenez Arms semi-automatic pistol
- .44 caliber Charter Arms revolver
- J. Stevens Arms Co. Rifle
- .357 Magnum Amedeo Rossi S.A. revolver

The indictment indicates that Crouch has two prior felony convictions for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, and an additional felony conviction for operating a motor vehicle as a habitual traffic violator.

Today's charges are the latest in a string of gun-related prosecutions undertaken by the United States Attorney's Office as part of its Violent Crime Initiative. Announced by Hogsett in March of this year, the initiative represents a comprehensive district-wide strategy to combat drug traffickers and criminals that use and carry firearms in their illegal activities through improved local collaboration and aggressive federal prosecution.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Zachary A. Myers, who is prosecuting both cases for the government, Crouch faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on the felon in possession of firearms charge. In the second indictment, Crouch faces up to 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each of the three counts of making or using a false document and another 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each of the three counts of obstruction of justice.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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